

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 MC-02 ACDA-07 IGA-02 /080 W

-----044330 030722Z /21

P 021230Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1669

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

CHUSMTM DHAHRAN PRIORITY

SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

USCINCEUR PRIORITY

S E C R E T SANA 2504

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, SA, YE, US

SUBJECT: ARMS FOR YEMEN

REF: STATE 152472

BEGIN SUMMARY. AS PER INSTRUCTIONS ON JULY 2 I REITERATED TO FOREIGN MINISTER ABDALLAH AL-ASNAJ US CONCERN ABOUT RECENT SOVIET ARMS DELIVERIES. AL-ASNAJ STATED PRINCE SULTAN HAD ALSO EXPRESSED SIMILAR CONCERN IN RECENT "STRONG LETTER" TO HIM WHICH HAD OBVIOUSLY UPSET AL-ASNAJ. AL-ASNAJ STATED SOMEWHAT HEATEDLY THAT YEMENI/SAUDI RELATIONS MAY BE AT A CRUCIAL TURNING POINT IF SAUDIS DO NOT CHANGE THEIR POLICY TOWARDS YEMENI INTERNAL SITUATION. I URGED COOLNESS

ON AL-ASNAJ DURING RIYADH MEETING AND HE AGREED. IF SAUDIS AND YEMENIS DO NOT COME TO SOME AGREEMENT RE AL-AHMAR, AL-HAMDI MAY WELL DECIDE TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST NORTHERN SHAYKHS NO MATTER THE CONSEQUENCES TO SAUDI/YEMENI RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

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1. I WAS ABLE TO SPEAK FOR A FEW MINUTES WITH FOREIGN MINISTER ABDALLAH AL-ASNAJ THIS MORNING (JULY 2) JUST PRIOR TO PRESIDENT AL-HAMDI'S DEPARTURE FOR RIYADH.

2. REITERATING US CONCERN ABOUT RECENT SOVIET ARMS DELIVERIES, I TOLD HIM THAT PRINCE SULTAN HAD ALSO RECENTLY EXPRESSED CONCERN TO USG ABOUT THIS MATTER. AL-ASNAJ

REPLIED SOMEWHAT HEATEDLY THAT PRINCE SULTAN HAD WRITTEN HIM A "STRONG LETTER" WHICH HE RECEIVED YESTERDAY IN WHICH HE RAISED THIS SUBJECT. AL-ASNAJ SAID THAT HE HAD NOT SHOWN THE LETTER TO PRESIDENT AL-HAMDI BECAUSE HE DID NOT WISH TO ANGER THE PRESIDENT ON THE EVE OF HIS MEETINGS WITH THE SAUDIS. AL-ASNAJ SAID THAT RELATIONS WERE ALREADY BAD ENOUGH BECAUSE OF CONTINUED SAUDI SUPPORT FOR AL-AHMAR. AL-ASNAJ WENT ON TO SAY THAT SAUDI/YEMENI RELATIONS COULD WELL BE AT A CRUCIAL TURNING POINT IF THE SAUDIS DO NOT APPRECIATE THE CURRENT INTERNAL SITUATION IN YEMEN. IN THIS CONNECTION HE SAID THE SAUDI EMBASSY A FEW DAYS AGO SENT A NOTE PROTESTING THAT SEVERAL OF THEIR CITIZENS HAD BEEN ROBBED BY AL-AHMAR'S MEN WHILE ON A TRIP TO THE NORTH. AL-ASNAJ NOTED WITH SOME EXASPERATION THAT YET WHEN THE YEMENI GOVERNMENTS RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF TAKING ACTION AGAINST AL-AHMAR, THE SAUDIS DEMUR. AL-ASNAJ

ASKED RHETORICALLY "WHAT DO THE SAUDIS WANT OF US?"

3. I ADVISED AL-ASNAJ THAT THE IMPORTANT THING NOW IS FOR THE YEMENIS TO KEEP THEIR COOL AND APPROACH THE RIYADH MEETING IN POSITIVE MANNER PREPARED TO LAY ALL OF THEIR PROBLEMS ON THE TABLE SO THAT THEY AND THE SAUDIS CAN DISCUSS THEM IN A FRATERNAL MANNER. I TOLD AL-ASNAJ THAT I WAS SURE THAT THE SAUDIS WILL BE PREPARED TO LISTEN, PARTICULARLY THE KING AND CROWN PRINCE FAHD; THE YEMENIS, SECRET

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HOWEVER, WILL HAVE TO TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO EXPLAIN THE CURRENT INTERNAL SITUATION AS WELL AS THE REASONS BEHIND THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF THE RECENT SOVIET ARMS SHIPMENTS. I SAID AS FAR AS THE USG IS CONCERNED WE WISH TO SEE SAUDI ARABIA AND YEMEN CONTINUE THEIR CLOSE RELATIONSHIP AND THAT WE WILL ACCEPT WHATEVER SAUDIS AND YEMENIS DECIDE REGARDING THEIR BILATERAL TIES.

4. AL-ASNAJ THANKED ME FOR THE ADVICE AND SAID THAT ALTHOUGH HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES ARE UPSET ABOUT PRINCE SULTAN, HE THOUGHT THAT AL-HAMDI WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO SEE THAT ALL THE PROBLEMS CAN BE WORKED OUT BETWEEN YEMEN AND SAUDI ARABIA.

5. COMMENT: AL-ASNAJ APPEARED GENUINELY UPSET BY THE SULTAN LETTER BUT I DO NOT BELIEVE THAT EITHER HE OR AL-HAMDI WILL ALLOW THEIR EMOTIONS TO RUN AWAY WITH THEM DURING THE RIYADH MEETINGS UNLESS THE SAUDIS PRESS TOO HARD. IN THIS CONNECTION THE TOUCHSTONE IN THE TALKS WILL DOUBTLESS BE SHAYKH AL-AHMAR. IF PRINCE SULTAN AND HIS SUDAIRI RELATIVES ARE NOT PREPARED TO REDUCE SAUDI SUPPORT FOR THE SHAYKH, I CAN EASILY FORESEE A SITUATION

WHERE AL-HAMDI WILL RETURN FROM RIYADH PREPARED TO TAKE
STRONG ACTION AGAINST AL-AHMAR NO MATTER WHAT THE CON-
SEQUENCES TO SAUDI/YEMENI RELATIONS MIGHT BE.
SCOTES

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
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